

# Inhibitor of Apoptosis Proteins as Regulatory Factors in the Normal and Inflamed Airways



Thesis submitted by

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*For my Mother, Teresa Roscioli*

# Table of Contents

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Abstract	
Declaration	
Acknowledgements	
Publications, Presentations, and Achievements	
List of Figures	
List of Tables	
Commonly Used Abbreviations	
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
1.1 Project Synopsis.....	1
1.2 The Respiratory System .....	2
1.2.1 The Airway Epithelium.....	2
1.3 Asthma.....	5
1.3.1 Asthma is an Inflammatory Disease of the Airways .....	5
1.3.2 The Prevalence of Asthma .....	6
1.3.3 Asthma Aetiology .....	8
1.3.4 Asthma Genetics.....	8
1.3.5 The Pathophysiology of Asthma .....	9
1.3.5.1 Asthma is driven by T helper cell inflammatory responses.....	9
1.3.5.2 The airway epithelium is involved in the pathogenesis of asthma ....	14
1.3.5.3 IFN $\gamma$ and TNF $\alpha$ in the pathogenesis of asthma .....	18
1.3.5.4 IFN $\gamma$ signalling .....	18
1.3.5.5 The role of IFN $\gamma$ in asthma .....	20
1.3.5.6 TNF $\alpha$ signalling.....	21

1.3.5.7 The role of TNF $\alpha$ in asthma.....	23
1.3.6 Current Asthma Treatments .....	25
1.4 Apoptosis.....	26
1.4.1 Apoptosis and the Caspases .....	26
1.4.2 The Relationship Between Apoptosis, Autophagy, and Necrosis .....	29
1.4.3 Aberrant Apoptosis in Disease.....	31
1.4.4 Apoptosis of Airway Epithelial Cells in Asthma.....	32
1.4.4.1 TNF $\alpha$ and potentiation of AEC apoptosis in asthma .....	35
1.4.4.2 IFN $\gamma$ and potentiation of AEC apoptosis in asthma.....	37
1.5 The Inhibitor of Apoptosis (IAP) Family.....	39
1.5.1 Introduction .....	39
1.5.2 IAP Structure and Function .....	39
1.5.3 IAPs as Endogenous Inhibitors of Caspases .....	42
1.5.4 Other Survival-Related Functions of IAPs .....	45
1.5.5 IAPs and Zinc .....	46
1.5.6 IAP Genetics .....	46
1.5.7 IAPs in Disease .....	49
1.5.8 IAPs and Asthma .....	52
1.5.9 IAPs and TNF $\alpha$ .....	53
1.5.10 IAPs and IFN $\gamma$ .....	56
1.5.11 IAPs as Therapeutic Targets .....	58
1.6 Summary .....	60
1.7 Central Hypothesis and Statement of Aims .....	61
Chapter 2: Methods and Materials .....	62
2.1 Mammalian Cell Culture.....	62
2.1.1 The 16HBE14o- Bronchial Epithelial Cell Line.....	62
2.1.1.1 Routine culture of 16HBE14o- cells.....	62
2.1.1.2 Cryopreservation and thawing of 16HBE14o- cells.....	62
2.1.2 Normal Human Bronchial Epithelial Cells .....	63
2.1.2.1 Routine culture of NHBE cells.....	63

2.1.2.2 Cryopreservation and thawing of NHBE cells .....	63
2.1.3 Primary Human Airway Epithelial Cells .....	64
2.1.3.1 Collection and plating .....	64
2.1.3.2 Anti-CD68 coating of culture dishes.....	64
2.1.3.3 Routine culture .....	64
2.1.3.4 Cryopreservation and thawing .....	65
2.2 Microscopy and Immunocytochemistry Procedures.....	65
2.2.1 Preparation of Cells for Microscopy .....	65
2.2.1.1 Cytospin preparations .....	65
2.2.1.2 Cells grown in 8-chamber culture slides.....	65
2.2.1.3 Cells grown on transwells .....	66
2.2.2 Fluorescence Immunocytochemistry .....	66
2.2.2.1 Fluorescence microscopy of cells grown on chamber slides.....	66
2.2.2.2 Fluorescence microscopy of cells grown on transwells .....	67
2.3 Lineage Analysis of Primary Airway Epithelial Cells .....	68
2.3.1 Diff-Quick (Romanosky) Morphological Analysis .....	68
2.3.2 Immunohistochemical Analysis .....	69
2.3.3 Primary Cells Grown at an Air-Liquid Interface Exhibit Characteristics of Airway Epithelial Cells .....	71
2.4 Western Analysis .....	73
2.4.1 Protein Extraction.....	73
2.4.2 Quantification of Protein Concentration.....	73
2.4.3 Denaturing Gel Electrophoresis.....	73
2.4.3.1 Sample preparation .....	73
2.4.3.2 Electrophoresis.....	73
2.4.4 Western transfer.....	74
2.4.4.1 Antibody labelling .....	74
2.4.4.5 Imaging and quantification.....	76
2.5 Real Time Polymerase Chain Reaction .....	76
2.5.1 RNA Extraction .....	76

2.5.2 Nucleic Acid Quantification and Quality Assessment.....	76
2.5.3 Complementary DNA Synthesis .....	77
2.5.4 Quantitative Polymerase Chain Reaction .....	78
2.5.5 PCR Product Purification .....	79
2.5.6 Agarose Gel Electrophoresis .....	79
2.6 qRT-PCR Primer Design.....	80
2.6.1 Primer Design .....	80
2.6.2 Primer Validation .....	83
2.7 Cell Viability, Apoptosis and Necrosis Assaying .....	87
2.7.1 Lactate Dehydrogenase Cytotoxicity Assay .....	87
2.7.2 Microscopy for Caspase-3/7 Activity and Necrosis.....	87
2.7.3 Western Analysis for Caspase Activity and Apoptosis Detection.....	88
2.7.4 Determination of the <i>Bax:Bcl2</i> Transcript Ratio .....	88
2.8 Gene Expression Knockdown with Small Interfering RNA.....	88
2.9 Statistics .....	89
Chapter 3: Cellular inhibitor of apoptosis-2 is a critical regulator of apoptosis in airway epithelial cells treated with asthma related inflammatory cytokines .....	90
Chapter 4: IAP genetics in asthma.....	94
X-linked inhibitor of apoptosis single nucleotide polymorphisms and copy number variation are not risk factors for asthma .....	96
<i>BIRC2</i> single nucleotide polymorphisms modulate the severity of asthma in a Caucasian community-based cohort .....	99
Chapter 5: Discussion.....	124
Supplementary Information .....	151
Appendices .....	161
References .....	183

## Abstract

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Asthma is potentiated by complex gene-environment interactions, and characterised by inflammation and degenerative changes to the conducting airways. Current therapeutics targeting the inflammation and bronchoconstriction are restricted to prophylactic effects. The airway epithelium is known to participate in the pathogenesis of asthma, and represents a therapeutic target. Airway epithelial cells (AEC) from asthmatics exhibit apoptotic changes, which correlate with disease-associated factors presented by the epithelium. However, the mechanisms which cause the apoptosis are not well defined. In particular, there has been little study of the role of the family of Inhibitor of Apoptosis Proteins (IAPs) in models of AEC apoptosis. The over-arching hypothesis in this thesis is that anomalies in one or more of the IAPs contribute to inflammation-induced AE apoptosis in asthma. Experiments in this thesis explored the role of XIAP, cIAP1 and cIAP2 in asthma, models of asthma-related inflammation, and genetic susceptibility to asthma.

The major methods used in these experiments included cell culture of primary AEC from both asthmatics and controls with/without treatment with IFN $\gamma$  and TNF $\alpha$ . siRNA knockdown, qPCR, western blotting, immunocytochemistry, functional caspase assays, and genotyping.

The major findings of this study are i) surprisingly, primary AECs do not undergo apoptosis after prolonged exposure to the proinflammatory cytokines IFN $\gamma$  and TNF $\alpha$  *ex vivo*; ii) rather, IFN $\gamma$  elicits a proapoptotic state in AECs, evidenced by, partial processing of procaspase-3, the absence of Poly (ADP-ribose) polymerase (PARP) cleavage, an increased Bax:Bcl2 transcript ratio, and the absence of morphological changes associated with apoptosis; iii) both XIAP and cIAP1 were constitutively expressed in AEC, and protein levels were unaffected by cytokine treatment. In contrast cIAP2, initially weakly expressed, was strongly inducible by cytokine treatment; iv) No differences were observed between AEC from asthmatics and controls in terms of either basal IAP gene expression

levels or their response to cytokine treatment; v) siRNA-mediated depletion of cIAP2-transcripts allows AEC to progress into apoptosis after extended culture, conditions which also resulted in a decrease in both cIAP1 and Bcl2; vi) genetic polymorphism in the genes encoding, XIAP cIAP1 and cIAP2 do not associate with susceptibility for asthma. However, cIAP1 polymorphism may modulate disease severity within asthmatics.

This thesis contributes to the knowledge of IAPs and apoptosis in asthma, and provides evidence that they are important for sustaining AEC survival, and participate within a cooperative of endogenous regulators of apoptosis. There is no evidence of intrinsic dysregulation of IAPs in asthma, yet cIAP1 polymorphism may modulate asthma severity, and IAPs are central in maintaining a proapoptotic state in AECs exposed to asthma related cytokines. Epithelial activation and damage, coupled with non-progression to apoptosis may contribute to fragility of the AE observed in asthma. Therapies targeting the IAPs may therefore provide a means of ameliorating the disease by allowing AECs to progress into apoptosis.



## Declaration

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I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Signed..... Date.....

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## Publications, Presentations, and Achievements

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Publications, presentations, and achievements made during this PhD are listed below.

### Published Journal Articles

Roscioli E, Hamon R, Lester S, Murgia C, Grant J, Zalewski P. Zinc-rich inhibitor of apoptosis proteins (IAPs) as regulatory factors in the epithelium of normal and inflamed airways. *Biometals* 2013; 26(2):205-27. (Appendix 4).

Roscioli E, Hamon R, Ruffin R, Lester S, Zalewski P. Cellular inhibitor of apoptosis-2 is a critical regulator of apoptosis in airway epithelial cells treated with asthma-related inflammatory cytokines. *Physiological Reports* 2013; 1(5):e00123 (Chapter 3).

Roscioli E, Hamon R, Ruffin RE, Zalewski P, Grant J, Lester S. X-linked inhibitor of apoptosis single nucleotide polymorphisms and copy number variation are not risk factors for asthma. *Respirology* 2013; 18(4):697-703 (Chapter 4, Part A).

Lang C, Hansen M, Roscioli E, Jones J, Murgia C, Leigh Ackland M, *et al.* Dietary zinc mediates inflammation and protects against wasting and metabolic derangement caused by sustained cigarette smoke exposure in mice. *Biometals* 2011; 24(1):23-39 (Appendix 5).

Murgia C, Grosser D, Truong-Tran A, Roscioli E, Michalczyk A, Ackland M, *et al.* Apical localization of zinc transporter ZnT4 in human airway epithelial cells and its loss in a murine model of allergic airway inflammation. *Nutrients* 2011; 3(11):910-28. (Appendix 6).

Tan N, Tran H, Roscioli E, Wormald P, Vreugde S. Prevention of false positive binding during immunofluorescence of *Staphylococcus aureus* infected tissue biopsies. *Journal of immunological methods* 2012; 384(1-2):111-7 (Appendix 7).

### **Submitted Manuscripts**

Roscioli E, Hamon R, Ruffin R, Zalewski P, Grant J, Lester S. *BIRC2* single nucleotide polymorphisms are protective of severe asthma in a Caucasian community-based cohort. *International Journal of Immunogenetics* 2013 (Chapter 4, Part B).

### **Manuscripts in Preparation**

Tan N, Cooksley C, Roscioli E, Drilling A, Douglas R, Wormald P, Vreugde S. Small colony variants and phenotype switching of intracellular *Staphylococcus aureus* in chronic rhinosinusitis.

Tran H, Roscioli E, Tan N, Cooksley C, Zalewski P, Wormald P, Vreugde S. Increased expression and sub-cellular translocation of AIM2 protein in conjunction with caspase-1 activation in sinus epithelium of the asthmatic endotype of chronic rhinosinusitis.

### **Conference Presentations**

“Expression and Function of Inhibitor of Apoptosis Proteins in Asthmatic and Non-Asthmatic Airway Epithelial Cells Treated with Inflammatory Cytokines.” Presented at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Research Day; Adelaide, 2012. Accepted for the seminar series competition based on abstract submission.

“Transcript Levels of Inhibitor of Apoptosis Proteins in the Normal and Asthmatic Airway Epithelium.” Presented at the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand conference in Brisbane; 2010.

“The Role of the Inhibitor of Apoptosis Proteins in Normal and Asthma Affected Airway Epithelium.” Presented at the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand Young Investigator of the Year in Adelaide; 2010.

“The Role of the Inhibitor of Apoptosis Proteins in Normal and Asthma Affected Airway Epithelium.” Presented at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Research Day seminar series in Adelaide; 2010.

## **Achievements**

Merit-based entry and scholarship recipient (\$24,000) for The University of Adelaide postgraduate certificate in Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Awarded the postgraduate certificate in Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship; 2012.

Runner-up in the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand Young Investigator of the Year seminar series competition, South Australian branch, Adelaide; 2010.

Co-investigator for The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Research Foundation research grant. Awarded funding (\$5,000) for genetics research presented in this thesis; 2010.

Awarded the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand travel grant (\$450), to participate in the Brisbane conference; 2010.

## List of Figures

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Figure 1.1: The structure of the airways .....	3
Figure 1.2: The airway epithelium and underlying structures .....	4
Figure 1.3: The global prevalence of clinical asthma .....	7
Figure 1.4: Helper T cell-regulated immunological responses in asthmatic airways .....	11
Figure 1.5: Airway remodelling in asthma .....	13
Figure 1.6: The bronchial epithelium in asthmatic and healthy individuals .....	16
Figure 1.7: AEC-derived TSLP can initiate airway inflammation .....	17
Figure 1.8: IFN- $\gamma$ signal transduction .....	19
Figure 1.9: TNF $\alpha$ signal transduction .....	22
Figure 1.10: Disease-related roles of TNF $\alpha$ in asthma .....	24
Figure 1.11: The mammalian family of caspases.....	27
Figure 1.12: The pathways to apoptosis and procaspase-3 processing.....	28
Figure 1.13: Distinctions between apoptosis, autophagy, and necrosis.....	30
Figure 1.14: A schematic representation of airway epithelial damage in asthma.....	34
Figure 1.15: The human Inhibitor of apoptosis protein family.....	41
Figure 1.16: Caspase activity is regulated by the IAPs.....	44
Figure 2.1: Airway biopsies propagated <i>ex vivo</i> exhibit characteristics of AECs .....	72
Figure 2.2: Design of mRNA specific qRT-PCR primers .....	81
Figure 2.3: Design of IAP specific qRT-PCR primers .....	82
Figure 2.4: qRT-PCR primer validation. ....	84
Figure 5.1: The cIAPs block IFN $\gamma$ -mediated apoptosis of AECs .....	137
Supp. Figure 1: Morphology of AECs exposed to TNF $\alpha$ and IFN $\gamma$ .....	152
Supp. Figure 2: IAP expression in AEC exposed to TNF $\alpha$ and IFN $\gamma$ .....	154
Supp. Figure 3: IAP expression in nasal AEC biopsies from asthmatics vs. controls.....	155
Supp. Figure 4: The <i>BIRC3</i> SNP rs3460 within the microRNA hsa-miR-616.....	156
Supp. Figure 5: Expression analysis of AECs treated with Fluticasone propionate .....	157
Supp. Figure 6: Morphology of AECs treated with Fluticasone propionate.....	159
Supp. Figure 7: XIAP is not modulated in AEC exposure to Embelin.....	160

## List of Tables

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Table 1.1: Disease-related and apoptotic effects of AECs exposed to TNF $\alpha$ .....	36
Table 1.2: Disease-related and apoptotic effects of AECs exposed to IFN $\gamma$ .....	38
Table 1.3: Studies examining <i>BIRC4</i> variations for association with disease .....	48
Table 1.4: XIAP in non-malignant pathologies .....	51
Table 1.5: The relationship between TNF $\alpha$ and the IAPs in diverse cell types .....	55
Table 1.6: The relationship between IFN $\gamma$ and the IAPs in different cell types .....	57
Table 1.7: IAP therapeutics in development .....	59
Table 2.1: Lineage analysis of primary airway cells via morphological characteristics .....	70
Table 2.2: Lineage analysis of primary airway cells via immunohistochemistry.....	70
Table 2.3: Detection antibodies specification for western analysis .....	75
Table 2.4: qRT-PCR primer specifications.....	86
Table 2.5: siRNA molecules used in knockdown procedures.....	89

## Commonly Used Abbreviations

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°C - Degrees celcius

AE - airway epithelium

AEC - Airway epithelial cell

ALI - Air-liquid interface

Bax - Bcl-2-associated X protein

Bcl2 - B-cell lymphoma 2

BEGM - Bronchial epithelial growth media

BLAST - Basic local alignment search tool

bp - base pair

cDNA - Complementary deoxyribonucleic acid

cIAP - Cellular inhibitor of apoptosisbp - Base pairs

DAPI - 4',6-diamidino-2-phenylindole

DISC - death-inducing signalling complex

Dox - Doxorubicin

DTT - Dithiothreitol

EDTA - Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid

g - Gravitational acceleration

gDNA - Genomic deoxyribonucleic acid

h - Hour

HPRT-1 - Hypoxanthine-guanine phosphoribosyltransferase

HRP - Horse radish peroxidase

IL - Interleukin

IFN- $\gamma$  - Interferon-  $\gamma$

IRF - Interferon regulatory factor

IL-1 $\beta$  - Interleukin-1 $\beta$

IL-4 - Interleukin-4

IL-13 - Interleukin-4

kDa - Kilo Dalton



M - Molar  
min - Minutes  
ml - Millilitre  
mm - Millimetre  
mM - Millimolar  
mRNA - Messenger ribonucleic acid  
NF- $\kappa$ B - Nuclear factor kappa B  
NHBE - Normal human bronchial epithelial cell  
nm - Nanometre  
PARP - Poly (ADP-ribose) polymerase  
PBS - Phosphate buffered saline  
PCR - polymerase chain reaction  
PET - Polyethylene terephthalate  
PI - Propidium Iodide  
qRT-PCR - Quantitative reverse transcription real-time polymerase chain reaction  
RT - Room temperature  
s - Seconds  
siRNA - Short interfering ribonucleic acid  
SFB - Serum free blocker  
Smac - Second mitochondrial activator of caspases  
STAT - Signal transducer and activator of transcription  
TBP - Tata box binding protein  
TBST - Tris-buffered saline  
TNF $\alpha$  - Tumour necrosis factor- $\alpha$   
TRADD - TNF receptor-associated death domain  
 $\mu$ g - Microgram  
 $\mu$ l - Microliters  
XAF1 - XIAP associated factor-1  
XIAP - X-linked inhibitor of apoptosis